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AUTHOR Anderson, Betty; Midgett, Jeanice
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ABSTRACT

A variety of ways to use television, drama, and music to enhance reading instruction are presented in this paper. The use of television is suggested as a motivator for reading and as a means to teach reading skills, and the use of books with television or movie tie-ins is suggested as a way to motivate readers. Sources for obtaining television scripts that can be used for reading materials are cited, and television guides designed for teacher use are described. Specific ideas for relating television viewing to the development of reading skills that are given include: (1) oral reading of scripts; (2) development of original scripts for oral reading; (3) comparison of themes treated in different programs and in different media; (4) comprehension of theme, plot, and character development; (5) vocabulary development; and (6) critical evaluation. Suggestions for combining drama with reading instruction include performing published or student created plays and using readers' theatre. It is also suggested that music can be used for learning in a relaxed manner and that songs can be used as the reading content for reluctant readers. (MKM)

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Use the Arts: Add Lustre to the Reading Program

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Use the Arts: Add Lustre to the Reading Program

Can other media be used to enhance the reading program? We believe that they can and will suggest ways to use television, drama, and music along with reading instruction in the classroom.

Television

First let's look at television. We have all heard the figures and we don't like the message they imply. The Ninth Gallup Educational Poll indicated that daily television viewing time is greater than homework plus recreational reading time (Gallup 1977). Research at Syracuse reported by Sheldon (1979) for fourth through sixth graders showed one to four hours of TV on weekdays, and three to twelve hours on weekends. Another dismal statement was that more time was spent in TV viewing than in the classroom by high school graduation (Potter 1976).

Because of such data many educators look upon TV as a villain or enemy and some agree with Winn's view in The Plug In Drug (1977) that television is dangerous and should be avoided entirely. Winn argues this is because TV forms a passive learning style that is firmly entrenched before children come to school, because TV is used by children and adults to relax and because no dialogue is present between the viewer and the presenter.

Richard Thomas (1979), The Walton's John-Boy, speaking as a parent stated that theater drama and reading books are also passive, relaxing and omit dialogue between the presenter and the receiver. He feels that dialogue is possible among viewers (as it is among readers) and particularly encourages dialogue between children and

adults for both reading and viewing. He also asks if TV critics decry what happened to the oral tradition when print came into popular use? Reasoner (1979) wonders if TV is any different from radio (before TV) as an alternative to reading.

Many other educators are responding to avoidance positions such as Winn's in a variety of ways that loosely represent the "if you can't beat them, join them" philosophy. These responses involve using television as a tie-in to reading and primarily focus on two approaches: using TV as a motivator for reading, and using TV as a means to teach reading skills.

First, television as a motivator. Can TV turn kids on to reading? Sheldon's report (1979) included a statement regarding book popularity from libraries and bookstores. Both sources noted great popularity of print materials used on television. Examples such as Star Trek (1977), Peanuts (Schulz 1952), and The Little House on the Praire (Wilder 1953) were given. Checking the most popular books reported in McKenzie's study (1976), Abrahamson reported that thirty-six of the fifty most popular books in grades seven through twelve were from television or movies.

Project Read is a successful effort sponsored by the American Bar Association to improve reading of youth detained in the juvenile justice system (Carsetti 1979). Paperback books are provided free for the students to take and later trade among themselves. Many different categories of books from sports to self-help are available but the most popular category is books with TV or movie tie-ins such as Star Wars (Richelson 1979) or Rocky (Libbey 1971) and Go Ask Alice (1971).

The CBS Television Reading Program (1979) has provided actual director's scripts of television programs for classroom use. In some cities, these were printed in the local newspaper as well as being distributed in the schools. In the twenty-two cities of the pilot project, nine used the newspaper as the print source of the scripts and in many of these the costs were underwritten by local business concerns. More recently about ninety cities were taking part in this program to relate reading and TV.

Six to eight programs per year are selected from specials while they are being developed. Those involved in choosing the shows to include in the project look for rich, educational content. If an adult show is selected they look for a child in the show to use as a connector to students (Williams 1979). Some examples of programs that were used during the 1978-79 season are: The Pearl Harbor episode of "The Waltons", "Lovey" (Part II of A Circle of Children), "The Corn Is Green" and "One in a Million".

The teacher's guide which accompanies the scripts emphasizes the plot development and overall comprehension of the story, explains the technical terms and filming directions which are included in the script, suggests enrichment activities and encourages related reading. If the script is based on a book, of course, reading of the complete book is advanced. A comparison of the differing approaches to the story from the two media (print and video) is also often included.

Those who work on this project look upon film and print as interchangeable resources. They can go from film to print as

readily as from print to TV or film. Students are highly motivated to read the TV scripts before viewing the program. And once started on the story line via the script in class, the follow up viewing is more knowledgeable, more critical and more likely to stimulate even more reading.

Films can also be used to turn students on to reading. A commercial product is available now to capitalize on student's high interest in movies. Films Inc. (1979) publishes sound filmstrips and movie scripts for popular films. Among their list of titles are such proven favorites from books or TV as: Lassie Come Home (Knight 1940), My Side of the Mountain (George 1967), Doctor Doolittle (Lofting 1967), The Wizard of Oz (Baum 1956) and Roots (Haley 1976). They have edited the original sound tract to usable classroom length and combined it with selected still frames from the movie to produce a sound filmstrip. For example the movie of The Wizard of Oz (1939) is condensed on to two twenty minute sound filmstrips. The teacher's guide suggests introductory, comprehension and enrichment activities as well as reading follow ups from the book.

Another product from this publisher is the script readers which use still frames from the movie for the illustrations and a shortened version of the script for the story line. The original sound track has also been edited to match the printed story and is provided on a cassette. The teacher's guide emphasizes dramatizing the story. Each character's part is analyzed to provide the number of lines, degree of importance and approximate level of difficulty

in reading. A vocabulary list of particularly difficult words in the script is provided. Lesson plans and skill development activities are also included.

Use of this material is a powerful motivator. Students are interested in reading the print source after viewing edited versions of classic films. And what student could resist the chance to read-along with Judy Garland or Bert Lahr as Dorothy or the Cowardly Lion?

Turning now from TV as a motivator to the use of TV for development of reading skills, four resources will be considered. These are Teachers Guides to Television, the Philadelphia Program, a supplement in a publication from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and finally the program guide from a local public television station. These are only a sampling of the resources available to interested teachers who wish to relate reading skill instruction to television viewing.

Teachers who subscribe to Teachers Guides to Television receive two issues per year and each issue is crammed full of teaching information. Future recommended programs are described along with introductory and post-viewing discussion questions. This excellent guide serves many teachers as a model for the use of TV as an aid to comprehension. Increased vocabulary, understanding of plot development, identification of theme and character analysis can all be developed using the guides. It is a logical step to continue these same comprehension skills in printed material following the viewing experiences. Teachers who wish to subscribe

or receive information about this classroom resource should write to:

Teachers Guides to Television
P. O. Box 564
Lenox Hill Station
New York, NY 10021

Another TV-reading program which used weekly series programs rather than specials was developed in Philadelphia (Feeley, 1975). Videotapes of the actual programs are used along with the scripts. Emphasis is on oral reading of the scripts followed by comparison with the videotapes for pronunciation, inflection and interpretation. An outgrowth of this has been for the children to write and produce on tape their own TV scripts.

A supplement in each issue of the American Educator, the journal of the AFT, deals with programming for the current season and includes study guides for upcoming specials and series. For example the study guide for the weekly series "The White Shadow" provides background information on the setting, characters and a synopsis of the basic situation used in this popular program ("TV Supplement" 1979). Some of the specific topics which have been treated in the past are mainstreaming, drugs and prejudice. The overall themes of the series of the influence a caring, capable teacher can have on youth and the need for respect for others are identified. Suggestions for classroom previewing and follow up activities lean heavily on discussion questions and primarily deal with plot, theme and character development or critical evaluation. Comparison of themes, characterization and realism is invited with shows such as "Happy Days" and "Welcome Back, Kotter". The role

of the teacher outside of classes and the role of sports in education are suggested for discussion and further research. A short bibliography for outside reading is included.

Subscribers to local PBS stations receive monthly TV guide publications which are another excellent source for the use of television in the classroom. If teachers are to use TV they need to know what will be shown ahead of time, so they can weave it into ongoing class activities. These local PBS program guides provide such advance notice about program content. Since public television uses special mini-series for such a large proportion of its programming, these monthly guides are valuable to teachers. An example was the six unit series of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" (1979), another school setting show. What a contrast Miss Brodie's privileged girls present to Coach Reeves inner-city basketball players. And yet overall themes of the role of the teacher and the need for mutual respect for others are developed in each of these diverse settings. The problems of youth reaching for maturity are presented each week and cry out for comparative discussion along with such popular print sources as Sara T. (Wagner 1976) or Then Again, Maybe I Won't (Blume 1971).

The synopsis of the program content provided in the local guide includes sufficient background information for the enterprising teacher to develop a vocabulary list for classroom activities while students are working with the program.

To summarize, the specific suggestions for relating television viewing to the development of reading skills that these TV guides have emphasized are:

1) oral reading of scripts

2) development of original scripts for oral reading

3) comparison of themes treated in different programs and different media

4) comprehension of theme, plot and character development

5) vocabulary development

6) critical evaluation.

Can TV be used as a classroom resource in the reading program? Certainly many educators are doing so and enough teaching material is available for the interested teacher to join forces with this powerful influence in our lives today.

What will the future bring? A new technological advance is likely to bring far more print messages to TV. Teletext is an information-communication system that transmits thousands of words for screen display if viewers use a simple decoding device (Margulies 1979). Experiments with the technology are going on at KSL-TV in Salt Lake City and the service is in use already in Europe. An example of how the teletext system might operate is during the national news. For instance an item covered on the news might be a congressional hearing or a murder trial. The newscaster tells viewers to use page 265 for further details. The viewer can punch this number on a decoding device and see an array of print on the screen giving extensive details or a transcript of the proceedings. Pages and pages can be stored for transmission, ready for viewing at a punch of the dial. The experiments at present are only within the station for FCC data gathering purposes. But the FCC will prob-

ably consider the feasability of this new form of television-reading and eventually the resources of a library may be connected to each TV set.

Reader's Theatre

Reader's Theatre is another medium that can be used to enhance reading comprehension. While Reader's Theatre is not widely known among elementary teachers (it's background is from secondary), many teachers have used this approach for years but didn't know what it was. Robert M. Post (1979, 262) defines Reader's Theatre as..."a form of oral interpretation in which a group of readers perform works of literature".

Some of the characteristics of Reader's Theatre (Larson 1976) are:

1. The use of scenery and costumes is small. Perhaps only a hat or held prop is used to identify a character.
2. There is not much physical movement or action. Voice inflections, hand gestures, facial expressions are used merely to suggest action and mood.
3. A narrator fills in much of the setting and action beyond that which is carried by the dialogue.
4. A script is used and the participants read rather than memorize lines.
5. The readers communicate directly with the audience rather than with each other. As they read their parts they maintain eye contact with the audience.

This format, of course, provides a motivating opportunity for in-depth interpretive comprehension of material as it is being considered for selection, being adapted for presentation and finally being rehearsed and read to the audience. Extensive practice on oral reading skills is also provided with this technique.

Many teachers may claim that they don't have time to work with Reader's Theatre and keep up with all the skills required in their reading programs. There is a small body of research which indicates that drama activities result in reading achievement gains. For example a study by Henderson and Shanker (1978) compared the comprehension gains of students who spent equal time in dramatic or workbook activities. These were second graders reading on preprimer to second reader levels. The design involved teaching eight stories by either drama or workbook method and then the method was switched for both groups. Tests followed each story and measured the specific comprehension skills of identifying details, sequence of events and main ideas of the stories. The teacher's manual was followed for directed reading activities of vocabulary introduction, skill development and oral and silent reading of each story. The only difference in the treatment between the groups was in the reinforcement which followed.

The drama group included puppets and pantomimes as well as traditional group dramas (the parts were spoken and not read). Group members discussed the characters and action, parts were picked and the drama was quickly done. An evaluation followed to com-

pare it with the written story and then the drama was redone, often several times, until all in the group had participated.

The workbook group spent equal time on reinforcement. Directions for the comprehension skillwork pages were given and when they were completed the papers were corrected and errors discussed with each child. Yet even with this enlightened and individualized workbook method, the t test indicated significant results favoring the drama activities on all three comprehension skills. Perhaps this well designed study will encourage replication or spur additional research in this area. Teachers fearful of taking time from direct skill reinforcement materials such as workbooks or dittos may also take heart from these research results and be more inclined to give Reader's Theatre a chance. It deserves widespread use to enhance the reading program for Reader's Theatre is easy to handle in the classroom, is highly motivating for students and provides for both oral reading and comprehension skill development.

Let's investigate additional ways to "add lustre" and to improve communication skills; namely, drama and music.

Drama

Shakespeare said:

> Therefore they thought it good you hear a play
> And frame your mind to mirth and merriment
> Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

Now we like to think that Mr. Shakespeare had teachers in mind when he wrote "to frame your mind with mirth and merriment." For we need to keep mirth and merriment in our lives merely to survive the school day. Haven't you had friends ask wonderingly "How do you stand it?" Meaning of course how on earth do you stand teaching--

pounding facts into reluctant brains, while trying to keep them from stepping all over your feet in the first grade; keeping them from killing each other in the fourth grade; writing on the classroom desks in the eighth and using you for Dear Abby in the twelfth. Well, surely, there are Mondays and Fridays when we wonder ourselves. And yet, in what other job on earth could we manage to stay young, because an eager class of modern-day youngsters is enough to keep us active. Where but in the classroom is so much demanded of us to challenge, to change, to move and to encourage, to promote and sometimes to even deflate.

Mr. Shakespeare had students in mind too, when he talked of mirth and merriment. Drama presents a living picture. They live vicariously in another time, another culture or situation. For some drama may merely lift them from the routine schedule into a time where oral reading and term papers are left far behind. This happens because they have been transported to the wonderful world of make-believe through the medium of drama.

Wagner (1970) reminded us that dramatic play is characteristic of childhood. Young children imitate the mannerisms and actions of older children and their parents. They pantomime floor sweeping, book reading and car driving. As they grow older the urge to create and imitate finds expression in backyard drama complete with an improvised or imaginary stage and costumes selected from discarded clothing.

Since drama is a natural learning and entertainment technique let's make lessons come alive with curriculum dramatics (Kelly 1976).

We can use any dramatic means that motivates, accelerates and deepens the quality of learning.

For the prereading child it's the rhythm of the nursery rhyme that attracts the child.

> Hippity, hop, to the barber shop,
> To get a stick of candy,
> One for you and one for me
> and one for sister Mandy.

The natural rhythm serves as a memory cue for some children; others may continue to develop motor skills as they hop or skip to the barber shop; and for some the value of sharing is demonstrated as the pieces of candy are given to a friend and a sister.

The prereading actor can participate actively in story telling if there is a repeated sequence. For example in the story of The Little Red Hen one child can say "Who will help me?" while others identified as ducks or pigs respond "Not I". Attending skills are reinforced during the performance (Wagner 1970).

Poor Pussy is effective in expressing verbal and nonverbal feelings. When the climax of the story is reached children can take turns demonstrating how they would comfort poor pussy (Carlson 1956).

For beginning readers, drama is an excellent way to increase their understanding of the plot, to increase vocabulary or to recall the sequence of events. The Three Billy Goats Gruff and fairy tales are perennial favorites of beginning readers. Stage props for the Three Billy Goats Gruff need only be a sturdy primary table with a chair on either end. Occasionally a child will choose to live

vicarously a role seldom experienced. For example a timid child may volunteer to be the grumpy troll who waits under the table and shouts "GET OFF MY BRIDGE." A non aggressive youngster may select the role of the biggest goat who knocks the Troll from the bridge.

This short drama can be cast again with other eager actors. Each time it is repeated the actors will have more understanding of their parts and each time the drama will be portrayed differently. The cue to stop a repeated performance will be the first sign of decreased interest (Tester 1970).

For the young reader Carlson (1956) suggested pantomine games or story title charades as an "acting it out" activity during reading time. In learning vocabulary the actor has to interpret the meaning and imagine the intonation of the voice. Word Theatre (Boning 1978) published by Barnell Loft is an excellent word reference material for children.

A favorite activity of older readers is biographical stories. A biographical approach to the drama lends a personalized touch. Students are lifted temporarily from routine into a heroic realm. This also provides an excellent orientation to problems faced by various groups in society.

For the scientific reader drama allows a visual perception of the reading experience. Let's use the introduction of the study of molecules to illustrate this point. Ping pong balls or golf practice balls can be used to introduce the composition of molecules in solids, liquids and gases.

Using the fifth grade Laidlaw Science book, some elementary students wrote a play about Marvin Molecule and his family tree.

When portraying Mr. Solid, the actors pressed ping pong balls tightly together; moved apart for Mr. Liquid; and most of them left the room when Mr. Gas was introduced.

When class members produce and direct a successful play, it should be reproduced on a filmstrip and the narration recorded on a cassette tape. This allows an individual or a small group to enjoy and review the content.

Tester (1970) pointed out that children grow in their ability to participate in creative dramatics. The first time the teacher tries this method, the results may be extremely discouraging, but they will become more and more satisfactory with continued participation.

There are many books designed to help children give plays. Sam Sandusky (Gould & Ely 1965) published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston presents complete plays and how to direct them. To the creative class you might chose to work with They Lived Like This in Shakespeare's England by Neurath and Turner (1968) and let individuals or pairs produce short plays pertaining to the information in the book. As in Shakespeare's time, additional scripts are then handwritten for each actor.

Acting is for everyone--the class entertainer and the shy one. So we challenge you to add lustre to learning or as Kenneth Eble (Frost & Rowland 1969) said "learning begins in delight and flourishes in wonder."

Music

Music is a natural, non-threatening medium. It provides opportunities for learning, relaxation, participation and creative expression. Listening to music assists students in organizing what is heard. As a reaction to music they move, sit quietly, play an instrument, sing, learn the sequence of the ABC's or increase their reading skills.

Marcelle Vernazza (1978) outlined for teachers how to develop a music learning episode. For the prereader a sturdy hand drum can be used with the song I Know Where You Are to recognize names. The children sing I know where you are, I know where you are Oh _____ Oh _____ I know where you are. Following each Oh a child's name is tapped on the drum; the child is identified by name and pointed out in the group. As a separate activity the children can play their names on the drum.

For elementary students the Slim Goodbody songs can be projected on the screen as the students learn about healthy bodies while they sing-along. These songs have great appeal for both younger and older students but can best be used for reading with the older students.

HITS Reading (Hits Pak 1976) is a developmental program using songs as the reading content. When we initiated this teaching technique with unmotivated, reluctant readers we were impressed with the gains in basic skills as well as the change in attitude.

Television, Reader's Theatre, drama and music are highly motivating to elementary students. They add continuity, interaction

and lustre to the curriculum. In addition they offer the potential for growth, an expansion of experience and increase creative thinking through personal involvement.

They can add lustre for all--from prereaders to scientific readers.

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